

Message Text

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ACTION EA-13

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ADP-00 PM-03 NSC-10 NSCE-00 CIAE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 INRE-00 SSO-00 L-02 IO-03 DPW-01

AID-10 EUR-10 RSR-01 H-01 PRS-01 USIE-00 DODE-00 /081 W

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O R 221050Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6293

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

USDEL JEC PARIS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

AMCONSUL DANANG

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMCONSUL CAN THO

CINCPAC

CDRUSAAG NKP RTAFB IMMEDIATE

COMUSMACTHAI

USDAO/SAIGON/AOSOP-OR

USDEL FPJMT SAIGON

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SAIGON 15184

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, MILI, VS

SUBJ: SITREP

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

THIS REPORT SUMMARIZES ALL PERTINENT INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO THE
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EMBASSY AS OF 1800 AUG 22, 1973

SUMMARY

CEASE-FIRE VIOLATIONS CONTINUED AT THE SAME RELATIVELY LOW LEVEL IN MR 1, AND REMAINED AT A HIGH LEVEL IN MR 2. INCREASED VC/ NVA OFFENSIVE ACTION IN BINH DINH AND KONTUM SENT OVERALL CASUALTIES UP, AND ENEMY CASUALTIES WERE PARTICULARLY HEAVY IN UNSUCCESSFUL GROUND ATTACKS AGAINST THREE RANGER UNITS NEAR TRUNG NGHIA. ACTIVITY ROSE IN MR 3, NOTABLY AT AN LOC AND IN HAU NGHIA. MILITARY ACTIVITY DECLINED THROUGHOUT THE DELTA, THOUGH THE SITUATION IN WESTERN DINH TUONG REMAINED VOLATILE. THERE IS AN INCREASING NUMBER OF REPORTS FROM THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY OF NVA/VC MILITARY PLANS TO INTERFERE WITH THE AUGUST 26 SENATE ELECTIONS. END SUMMARY.

PART I FPJMT

1. DISCUSSIONS IN THE FPJMT CONTINUE TO CENTER MAINLY ON THE BUILDING OF CEMETERIES AND MEMORIALS AND REMAIN DEADLOCKED. GENERAL ATMOSPHERE OF MEETINGS CONTINUES TO BE COURTEOUS AND STRAIGHTFORWARD WITH A MINIMUM OF POLEMICS EXCHANGED AMONG THE DELEGATIONS. HOWEVER, AS ARGUMENTS BECOME REDUNDANT, USDEL OBSERVES TRACES OF BOREDOM.

2. AT AN AUGUST 20 PRIVATE MEETING USDEL INFORMED THE DRV OF ARRANGEMENTS OF THE RETURN OF A NORTH VIETNAMESE FISHERMAN TO HANOI ON THE AUGUST 24 SAIGON-HANOI LIAISON FLIGHT (SEE SAIGON 15006). THE DRV DEL EXPRESSED AGREEMENT. THE DEPUTY CHIEF OF THE DRV DELEGATION INFORMALLY REQUESTED THAT THE US INFLUENCE THE RVN TO RELEASE CIVILIAN DETAINEES. IN RETURN, HE INDICATED THERE COULD BE PROGRESS ON THE RETURN OF THE REMAINS OF THOSE WHO DIED IN CAPTIVITY IN NVN AND ON NEGOTIATIONS OF MODALITIES OF CRASH AND GRAVE SITE INVESTIGATIONS AND REPATRIATION OF REMAINS. (BOTH THE DRV AND PRG DELEGATIONS HAVE MADE SIMILAR PROPOSALS IN THE PAST.)

3. A JCRC SPECIALIST SEARCH TEAM HAS RECOVERED SOME PARTIAL REMAINS AND PERSONAL EFFECTS AT A CRASH SITE IN THE RUNG SAT AREA OF BIEN HOA PROVINCE SOUTHEAST OF SAIGON. IN A SEPARATE JCRC OPERATION ON AUGUST 21, THE PARTIAL REMAINS OF ONE SKELETON BE-

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LIEVED TO BE NON-ORIENTAL WERE RECOVERED IN BINH CHANH DISTRICT, BIEN HOA PROVINCE.

PART II MR 1

1. CEASE-FIRE VIOLATIONS CONTINUED AT THE SAME RELATIVELY LOW LEVEL IN MR-1. TWO THIRDS OF THE 24 PREPOTED CEASE-FIRE VIOLATIONS WERE ATTACKS BY FIRE (ABF). REPORTED KIA'S WERE: GVN-11, PRG/NVA-20.

2. THE ENEMY CONTINUES TO HARASS ARVN ROAD BUILDING AND RESUPPLY EFFORTS AT BACH MA MOUNTAIN OVERLOOKING ROUTE 1 IN SOUTHEASTERN THUA THIEN. ON AUGUST 20 FOUR SUPPLY HELICOPTERS ATTEMPTING TO LAND AT THE MOUNTAIN TOP OUTPOST WERE DRIVEN OFF BY ANTI-AIRCRAFT FIRE. ALTHOUGH PROVINCE AND I CORPS FORWARD OFFICERS RECOGNIZE THAT THE BACH MA ROAD CANNOT BE COMPLETED BEFORE THE ONSET OF THE RAINY SEASON, ARVN ENGINEERS RESUMED THEIR EFFORTS ON AUGUST 20 AFTER AN INTERRUPTION OF SEVERAL DAYS. THE PHU LOC DISTRICT CHIEF, WHO HAS PULLED ONE OF HIS RF BNS OFF SEARCH OPERATIONS TO PROTECT THE ENGINEERS FROM ENEMY HARASSMENT, DOES NOT EXPECT THAT THE OUTPOST WILL BE ABANDONED WHEN BAD WEATHER PRECLUDES NORMALY RESUPPLY BY AIR. HE INSISTS THAT THE RF COMPANY ON THE TOP CAN BE SUPPLIED BY PORTERS AND BY HELICOPTERS DURING BREAKS IN THE WEATHER.

3. THE ENEMY APPEARS TO BE INCREASING EFFORTS TO PROCURE A SHARE OF THE EIGHTH LUNAR MONTH RICE HARVEST IN PHONG DIEN AND PHU LOC DISTRICTS, WHERE THE CROPS WILL BE BETTER THAN AVERAGE. ONE MAN CAPTURED IN A TERRITORIAL FORCES AMBUSH SAID HIS GROUP WAS PART OF THE "FINANCE CADRE" WHOSE MISSION WAS TO PURCHASE FROM THREE TO FOUR THOUSAND BAGS OF RICE FROM THE AREA. HE HAD MADE TWO SUCCESSFUL SHOPPING TRIPS BEFORE BEING AMBUSHED. THE THUA THIEN NATIONAL POLICE COMMANDER IS READY TO MOUNT OPERATIONS AGAINST PLANNED FUTURE VC PROCUREMENT ACTIVITIES AS THE NATIONAL POLICE BELIEVE THEY HAVE PIN-POINTED ALL THOSE INVOLVED IN THE NETWORK AND ARE ONLY WAITING FOR THEM TO MOVE BEFORE ROUNDING THEM UP.

PART III MR 2

1. MILITARY ACTIVITY REMAINED AT A HIGH LEVEL IN MR 2 OVER THE PAST 48 HOURS. THERE WERE A TOTAL OF 39 INCIDENTS REPORTED, AND THESE WERE CONCENTRATED IN BINH DINH AND KONTUM. MOST OF THE INCI-
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DENTS WERE LISTED AS ENEMY-INITIATED ATTACKS BY FIRE, TO WHICH THE RVNAF RESPONDED. THERE WERE TWO MORE RAILROAD MININGS, IN PHU YEN AND BINH THUAN. CASUALTIES INCREASED, PARTICULARLY ON THE ENEMY SIDE: VC/NVA - 147 KIA AND THREE CAPTURED; RVNAF - 27 KIA AND 44 WIA. THE NUMBER OF AIR STRIKES - 34 ON AUGUST 20 AND 46 ON AUGUST 21 - REMAINED SUBSTANTIAL AND CONCENTRATED IN BINH DINH (56) AND KONTUM (20).

2. JUDGING FROM THE GREATER THAN USUAL NUMBER OF GROUND ATTACKS, THE ENEMY HAS INCREASED OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS IN KONTUM AND BINH DINH. THREE ENEMY ATTACKS IN THE TRUNG NGHIA AREA WERE REPULSED BY RVNAF UNITS, WITH LOSSES OF ONLY 17 KIA AND 23 WIA WHILE KILLING A TOTAL

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6294

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

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AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

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USDEL JEC PARIS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

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AMEMBASSY WARSAW

AMCONSUL DANANG

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

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AMCONSUL CAN THO

CINCPAC

CDRUSAAG NKP RTAFB IMMEDIATE

COMUSMACHTAI

USDAO/SAIGON/AOSOP-OR

USDEL FPJMT SAIGON

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122 OF THE ENEMY. CAPTURED EQUIPMENT TENDS TO SUPPORT THESE CLAIMS, AND THE POLOFF AT KONTUM REPORTS THAT STATISTICS OF THE LARGEST INCIDENT (IN WHICH 89 ENEMY WERE KILLED) WERE BASED ON ACTUAL BODY COUNT. IN BINH DINH, WE BELIEVE THE INCREASED ENEMY ACTIVITY IS LARGELY IN RESPONSE TO CONTINUED RVNAF ATTEMPTS TO
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SECURE MORE CONTESTED GROUND ALONG HIGHWAY 1, PARTICULARLY IN TAM QUAN DISTRICT. THE CHIEF OF AN NHON DISTRICT STATED THAT, AFTER THE SENATE ELECTIONS WERE OVER, HE WOULD BEGIN SECURING EASTERN AN NHON, WHERE THE COMMUNIST FORCES ARE REPORTED TO BE WEAK. SUCH ACTION WOULD PROBABLY RESULT IN A STILL HIGHER LEVEL OF HOSTILITIES.

3. GENERAL CAM, CG OF THE ARVN 23RD DIV IN KONTUM, TOLD CON GEN NHA TRANG THAT THE COMMANDER OF THE ENEMY 95B REGT RECENTLY MADE RADIO CONTACT WITH THE COMMANDING OFFICER OF HIS 44TH REGT AND INDICATED A DESIRE FOR SUBSTANTIVE TALKS. CAM SENT WORD THAT TALKS COULD NOT TAKE PLACE UNTIL THE ENEMY RETIRED TO THE WEST BANK OF THE POKO RIVER WHICH THE NVA CROSSED IN JUNE TO OCCUPY POLEI KRONG AND TRUNG NGHIA.

4. PLEIKU REPORTS THAT COMMUNISTS HAVE TOLD WOODCUTTERS THAT THEIR VOTER REGISTRATION CARDS WILL BE CONFISCATED AND THEY WILL BE DENIED USE OF THE ROADS TO GET TO THE POLLS. DISRUPTION OF ELECTION ACTIVITIES WILL REPORTEDLY BEGIN AUGUST 25.

PART IV MR 3

1. THE NUMBER OF REPORTED CLASHES (42) WAS UP IN MR 3, WITH NOTABLE ACTIVITY IN THE VICINITY OF AN LOC AND IN HAU NGHIA PROVINCE. THE TEN INCIDENTS NEAR AN LOC INCLUDED ATTACKS ON THREE RANGER BNS, WHILE THE COMMUNISTS IN HAU NGHIA ATTACKED A PATROL OF THE ARVN 5TH DIV IN TRANG BANG DISTRICT AND BLEW UP A VILLAGE OFFICE. CASUALTIES WERE LOW: GVN - THREE KILLED, 16 WOUNDED: PRG/NVA- TWO KILLED AND A TAX COLLECTOR CAPTURED.

2. AT A SPECIAL MEETING AUGUST 21, MR 3 CG LTG MINH TOLD HIS PROVINCE CHIEFS AND DIVISION COMMANDERS THAT PERIOD FROM NOW TO END OF 1973 IS CRUCIAL IN MR 3. HE EMPHASIZED THAT GVN WAS NO LONGER WORRIED ABOUT VIOLATING THE CEASE-FIRE, ONLY ABOUT CONTROL OF PEOPLE AND RVN INSTITUTIONS IN MR 3. GVN MUST PROTECT PEOPLE'S RIGHT TO VOTE IN COMING UPPER HOUSE ELECTION, AND ASSURE 100 PER CENT TURNOUT THROUGHOUT REGION. GVN MUST CONTROL RICE HARVEST AND PREVENT IT FROM FALLING INTO COMMUNIST HANDS. PROVINCE CHIEFS SHOULD GET OUT AMONG THE PEOPLE, AND IMPROVE PERFORMANCE OF PROPAGANDA MACHINERY.

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3. REPORTS FROM VARIOUS PROVINCES TEND TO CONFIRM INFORMATION REPORTED IN AUGUST 20 SITREP THAT COMMUNISTS ARE TAKING SOME INTEREST IN AUGUST 26 UPPER HOUSE ELECTION. IN GENERAL THEY ARE

SAYING IT IS INVALID BECAUSE RVN CONSTITUTION HAS BEEN SUPERSEDED BY PARIS AGREEMENT, AND IRRELEVANT BECAUSE COMMUNISTS WILL SOON TAKE OVER COUNTRY ANYWAY. THEY ARE REPORTEDLY PLANNING SOME DISRUPTION AND SABOTAGE, AND IN DIFFERENT PLACES URGING PEOPLE TO BOYCOTT THE ELECTION, TO CAST INVALID BALLOTS, OR MERELY TO VOTE AS THEY LIKE. (CONGEN BIEN HOA DOES NOT THINK COMMUNIST DISRUPTION WILL AMOUNT TO MUCH.) MEANWHILE PROVINCE CHIEFS ARE PLANNING THE NECESSARY MEASURES TO MAKE SURE THAT SAIGON'S ELECTION REQUIREMENTS ARE MET.

PART V MR 4

1. MILITARY ACTIVITY CONTINUED TO DECLINE IN MR 4. EXACTLY HALF THE 41 INCIDENTS REPORTED TOOK PLACE IN DINH TUONG, WHICH REMAINED THE PRINCIPAL SEAT OF ARMED CONFLICT IN THE DELTA. CHUONG THIEN REMAINED QUIET, BUT ELSEWHERE IN THE SOUTHERN DELTA, ELEMENTS OF AN RF BN FELL INTO A NIGHT AMBUSH IN NAM CAN DISTRICT IN AN XUYEN AND A VC BN INTERCEPTED A BARGE CONVOY IN BAC LIEU AND LEVIED A 7.9 TONS TRIBUTE ON ITS 1,000 TON CARGO. RVNAF REPORTS LOSSES OF 28 KIA AND 208 WIA AND CLAIMS 106 VC/NVA KIA AND 11 CAPTURED.

2. ALTHOUGH MILITARY ACTIVITY FELL OFF SHARPLY FROM LAST WEEK'S INTENSE FIGHTING, THE INSECURE SITUATION IN DINH TUONG WAS ILLUSTRATED BY TWO INCIDENTS ON NORMALLY SAFE ROADS: ON ROUTE 29, WHICH CONNECTS CAI LAY AND MOC HOA, A JEEP WAS STRUCK BY A B-40 ROUND AND A DISABLED VETERAN WAS KILLED AND TWO OTHER CIVILIANS PROBABLY KIDNAPPED IN AN INCIDENT DURING THE NIGHT OF AUGUST 19 ON HIGHWAY 4. FRIENDLY FORCES ON AUGUST 20 ALSO WITHDREW "UNDER PRESSURE" FROM AN OUTPOST IN CAI BE DISTRICT.

3. ADDITIONAL DETAILS SUBSTANTIATE THE RF VICTORY IN THIEU CAN DISTRICT, VINH BINH AUGUST 19. IN A HELIBORNE OPERATION ASSISTED BY AIRSTRIKES, THE 404TH RF BATTALION AND A SECTOR RECONNAISSANCE PLATOON DECIMATED THE VC 306TH BN, PROBABLY ELIMINATING THE UNIT AS AN EFFECTIVE FIGHTING FORCE. THE RF KILLED 65 VC INITIALLY, AND THE NEXT DAY IN SEARCHING THE BATTLEFIELD, KILLED 19 MORE. THIS SUCCESSFUL RF OPERATION FOLLOWED A REVERSAL AUGUST 18 IN THE SAME CONFIDENTIAL

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HAMLET, WHEN THE 471 RF BN WAS AMBUSHED BY THE VC AND SUFFERED 20 KILLED AND 20 WOUNDED, INCLUDING ITS COMMANDER. THE TIDES OF WAR CONTINUED TO EBB AND FLOW IN VINH BINH. ALMOST SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH THE 404TH RV VICTORY AUGUST 19, A VC FORCE CAPTURED AN OUTPOST IN TRA CU DISTRICT, KILLING 17 PF DEFENDERS.

4. THE VINH LONG GVN/TPJMC CHIEF TOLD A VICE CONSUL THAT HIS GOVERNMENT'S POLICY ON REPORTING ALLEGED CEASE-FIRE VIOLATIONS TO THE ICCS IS DETERMINED BY THE NUMBER OF CASUALTIES SUFFERED IN AN INCIDENT. IF FIVE OR MORE CIVILIANS OR SOLDIERS ARE KILLED, THE GVN

WILL REQUEST AN INVESTIGATION BY THE ICCS: IF THE VC KILL FEWER THAN FIVE, THE GVN WILL REPORT THE INCIDENT TO THE ICCS FOR ITS INFORMATION ONLY. AT THE SAME TIME, THE GVN WILL REQUEST INVESTIGATION OF ANY INCIDENT WHICH RESULTS IN CASUALTIES SUFFERED BY GVN OFFICIALS. (EMBASSY COMMENT: THESE GUIDELINES WOULD BE IN LINE WITH A REPORTED EARLIER GVN DECISION TO LIMIT INVESTIGATION REQUESTS TO THE BACK-LOGGED ICCS. END COMMENT.)
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